



Photo by Nick D'Amario, USAG Grafenwoehr

Strykers, New Housing Complex Highlight Grafenwoehr Ceremonies

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany -- The status of IMA-EURO's Grafenwoehr Garrison as one of the Army's premier raining, power projection and family support installations in Europe will be highlighted in two ceremonies to be held here next month.

On September 15, IMA-EURO, USAREUR and host nation dignitaries will officially welcome the 2nd Cavalry (Stryker) Regiment to Vilseck, a sub-community of USAG Grafenwoehr. Later in the day, the garrison will dedicate the Netzaberg family housing area, the largest single Army "build-to-lease" project in Europe.

The Netzaberg complex will include community support buildings and 830 residences for military families. It will be constructed on a build-to-lease basis by a Danish-German development partnership at an estimated cost of 192 million Euros. The area's community facilities will include an elementary school and a middle school (\$36.2 million); a child development and youth center (\$14.7 million); a community center and chapel complex (\$10 million) and an AAFES shopette (\$3.3 million). In anticipation of the garrison's growing population this spring, Grafenwoehr opened a \$12 million gym with more than \$1 million worth of fitness equipment.

The importance of Grafenwoehr as an enduring IMA installation is validated by its priority funding status within EUCOM's 2004-2008 Strategic Theater Transformation Plan. Construction projects include new barracks, a live-fire facility and an urban assault course -- solidifying Grafenwoehr-Vilseck's role as the largest, best equipped Army training bases in Europe. IMA and USAREUR plans call for sufficient facilities there to support training for six battalion-size units.

The arrival of the Stryker combat team also increases the installation's potential as a global power projection platform; one able to harness the transportation capacity of military and civilian airports, an extensive rail system and northern European seaports.

Coming from Fort Lewis, the 2nd Cavalry Regiment is the largest unit to relocate to Germany in the past several decades. It's also the first large unit to arrive concurrently with family members. Garrison support for the move is also historic. Soldiers and their families were bused directly from Nurnberg Airport. Following initial in-processing, they were transported with their baggage and pets to family quarters in the Vilseck community, where their hold baggage was waiting for them.

"Fast, efficient and virtually painless" are the watchwords Grafenwoehr officials are using to describe the support and settling-in of a unit that will eventually comprise some 9,000 soldiers and family members.